

THROUGH *the* HOME  
*of* TAPESTRY  
BRICK







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# FOREWORD



IN the top floor of the Arena Building, No. 40 West 32d Street, in New York City, is the new Home of "Tapestry" Brick.

The remarkable growth of the "Tapestry" Brick business, during the last few years, has made it necessary to seek new and larger quarters. This has given us the opportunity, so long sought for, of building and equipping a suite of offices especially for the requirements of our business, and of thus presenting "Tapestry" Brick in a more intelligible and effective way.

In planning these new quarters we departed radically from existing practices.

The time-honored method of the ordinary brick merchant—that of showing a single sample brick, or at most a dozen, built up on a shelf with wooden strips to imitate mortar, is now entirely outgrown. As well might the tailor show his customers the yarn from which their cloth is to be woven. Nothing short of a whole wall can convey an adequate idea of the characteristics and charm of "Tapestry" Brick. But there were many sizes and colors to be shown in our new exhibit, and many styles of bonds and mortar joints and numberless details affecting the appearance of the finished work.

How could all this variety of color and size and effect be presented without the confusion of the ordinary multi-colored "Brick-Shop," with its mixtures of red and buff and gray? How could a display, primarily commercial in its nature, be given the atmosphere of an art exhibition?

The solution of these problems is set forth in the following pages.

In the New York Home of "Tapestry" Brick, five large exhibition rooms have been provided, three of them with immense skylights; each room is finished in a different color of brick, in order that each may convey its own message without interference. All standard and many special bonds and a great variety of mortar joints are exemplified, while there is a wealth of decorative patternwork, tilings for the terrace and the interior floor, and a whole room devoted to the use of brick in fireplace and mantel construction.

The number of separate rooms into which this exhibit is divided, its size and completeness, and the study which has been given to its æsthetic side, are all without a parallel in the brick world.

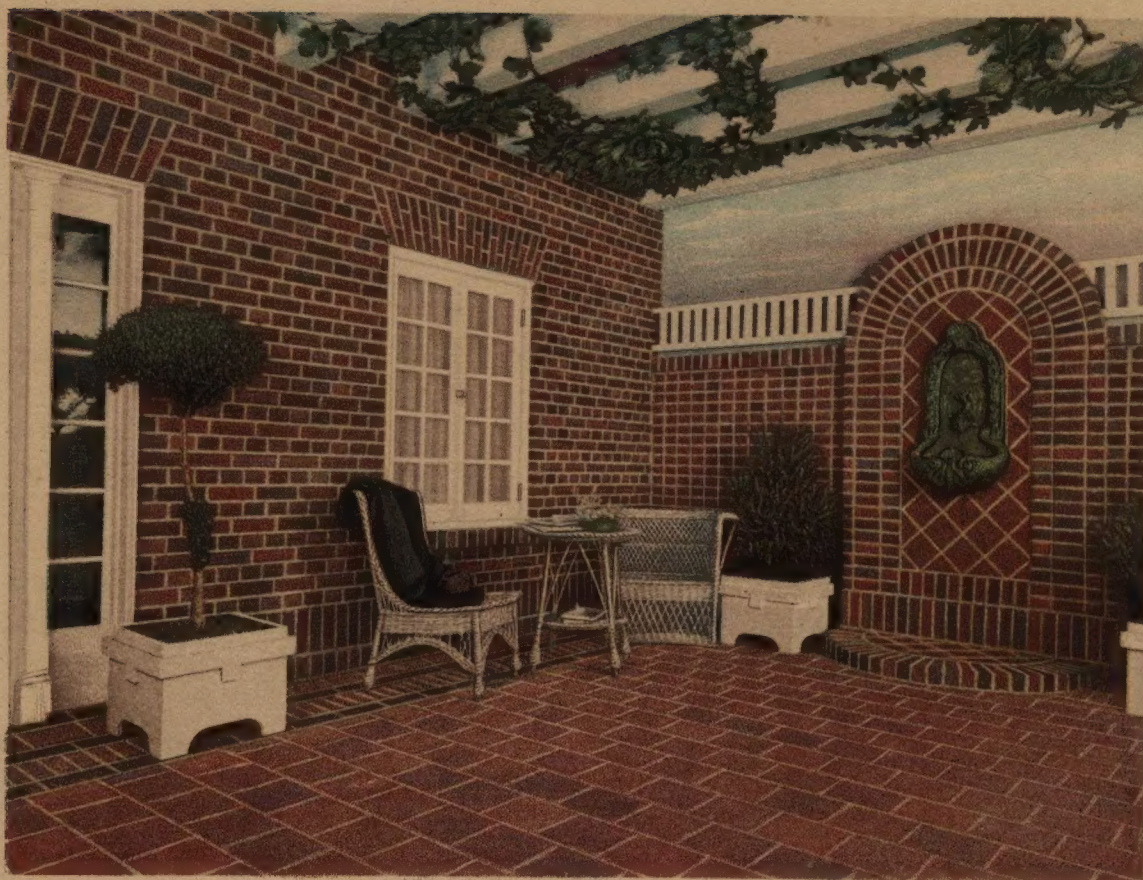
Feeling that the verdict of a disinterested party might be more significant to the public than much self praise, we have asked a member of the architectural profession to inspect these rooms and to write his impressions for publication.

After reading his criticisms, which are given in the following pages, you are cordially invited to visit us.

It is for you that we have built this Home of "Tapestry" Brick.

FISKE & COMPANY, INC.





### THE PERGOLA

"Red" group of "Tapestry" and "Caledonian" Brick, standard size, full range of color. Bonds employed are: "Flemish" in the house wall, all-header in the fountain wall and "Dutch" in the garden wall (see page 12). Mortar joints are  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick, "raked out" in the house wall and "rough-cut-flush" elsewhere. The floor is of "Garden" Tile, 8 inches square, laid with "rough-cut-flush" mortar joints,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick.

## THROUGH THE HOME OF "TAPESTRY" BRICK

BY ARTHUR G. BYNE



UNTIL recently, the word "brickwork" has signified to most people the dreary, monotonous-looking factories of some industrial town, or perhaps the dull, uninteresting walls of the unloved schoolhouse of childhood. Of late, however, foreign travel has given the American a new point of view in connection with this subject. He has observed the wonderful effects obtained ages ago in Northern Italy by the use of brick, or has noted the fine old Sixteenth Century houses in France, with their diagonal brick patterning in different colors; or, going still farther back in the centuries, has examined old Roman work with its charming contrasts between pale red walls and deeper tinted cornices and



mouldings, all with about the same tone value, mellow and peaceful, and not in the least reminiscent of the home factory or the schoolhouse. This foreign brickwork has all looked inimitable, yet one could not refrain from wishing that the modern American manufacturer would try to emulate it.

And now we have "Tapestry" Brick to prove that he is doing so. Brick, after long abuse and neglect, has escaped from the unintelligent domination of the demon machinery, and is again taking its place as an art product. It is even surpassing its ancient reputation, for brickwork such as we are about to describe has an æsthetic value never before attained.

For the purpose of presenting the possibilities of "Tapestry" Brick to both architect and layman, its makers, Fiske & Company, Inc., have erected a suite of "Tapestry" Brick rooms on the top floor of the Arena Building in New York City. These are architectural, decorative, ingenious, harmonious, and above all, educational.

A visit to this unique exhibit is best started at the Pergola, with its realistic impression of out-of-doors. One's eyes naturally center on the east or fountain wall, laid with all-headers, as the most distinctive feature. This header work recalls an all-over-patterned Oriental rug, and for that very reason looks at its best in a small wall rather than on a large façade. The eye lingers on this wall. Somewhere in Stamboul, or Damascus, or some other Eastern city of enchantment, hanging beside a trickling fountain, there ought to be rugs of just such color and texture as this brickwork possesses.

The rest of the Pergola is striking also in its less exotic way. It exemplifies several styles of laying up brick—different bonds, with mortar joints "rough-cut-flush" and "raked out," and with many gradations of tone in both the brick and the mortar. Yet the result of all these combinations is perfectly homogeneous, as in some old building abroad that took a century or more to erect, and in which, consequently, different methods and materials have succeeded each other with felicitous result.

It would be hard to say which wall of the Pergola one prefers, and the question is lost sight of in admiring the mossy, mellow shades which until recently we thought could be imparted only by time. "Tapestry" Brickwork does not have to wait for the caressing hand of centuries to give it the charm of age.

Passing from the Pergola one enters the Library, where it takes but a glance to prove that bricks make an attractive background for books. As to what a fireplace should be there are several here to compare and choose from, some extremely simple, others more ornamental. Each exhibits a different color scheme—amounting almost to polychrome. This is particularly grateful to eyes that have so long been used to monotone, for our early chaste white Colonial and then our long period of gloomy Victorian Gothic have made us forget what joy can be imparted to architecture by color. If "Tapestry" Brick, with its buffs and grays, its reds and browns and rich plum shades, accomplished no other mission than to bring this joy back into our rooms, it would still deserve all praise.





### THE FIREPLACE ROOM

This room contains five different fireplaces in Red, Gray and Golden-Buff "Tapestry" Brick. It is finished and furnished throughout in "Craftsman" style, and is lighted by an overhead skylight, concealed by a heavy beamed ceiling containing small ground glass panels. The fireplace illustrated above has a "Craftsman" Heater.

In these days when painted mural decoration can be afforded only by the rich, it is worth knowing that here, in this structural material for walls, both color and design are embodied. How satisfying in this respect is the golden-buff mantel on the south wall! It suggests unbounded possibilities, not only for fireplaces and interior walls, but, on a larger scale, exteriorly. By copying the clever way in which the mortar matches the body of the brick, large flat decorative panels could be obtained, with the darker vertical ribs increased proportionately in width. It is simple to imagine from this admirable specimen of a brick fireplace, the whole lower portion of a house laid up in the same manner, as beautiful in its way as the old half timber work of Europe.

Opposite this fireplace is one that uses many sizes of brick, thus enabling the designer to humor his fancy without stint. Patterning like this was often used by the ancients, but whereas they had to cut up larger bricks to get the smaller units required by their designs, we now have the different sized units in the fire-





### THE GOLDEN-BUFF ROOM

This room forms the entrance hall of the suite. It is lined with standard size Golden-Buff "Tapestry" Brick and Tile, trimmed with white Colonial woodwork, and furnished in mahogany. The floor is of Repressed Tile to match the walls, with a border of Battery Tile and "Tapestry" Brick, all laid with a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch buff mortar joint.

place before us all standardized. The little Pony Brick, the sturdy Norman Brick, the long flat Real Roman Brick, are all made to measure, and require not one extra minute of the bricklayer's time to put in place. This variety of size and form is an innovation in this field. The complaint of a great architect of a few years ago that "the aim of every brickmaker is to produce units as exact in shape, as sharp in edge, as smooth in surface, and as uniformly bright red as it is possible to make them," no longer holds true. "Tapestry" Brick has learned Nature's lesson of endless variety.

In the red fireplace extending from floor to ceiling, so well illustrated on the opposite page as to require no lengthy description, a real log fire is always burning on cold days, thus adding a note of genuine hospitality and good cheer to the whole room.

The next room, the Red Room, is a veritable *tour de main* in the way of wonderful brickwork. It brings to mind all the glory of the best Italian period, plus





### THE RED ROOM

This is a view looking southwest. This room contains sixteen different panels of various sizes and shapes, including all standard bonds and a great variety of thickness, color and finish in mortar joints. Particular attention is called to the frieze of brick patternwork and to the tympanums, two of which are of faience and two of brickwork.

the richer coloring which the modern process has attained. To begin with, the Red Room is specially well designed to show off the material—simple side walls crowned with a decorative frieze and enriched by polychrome tympanums over the doorways. So harmonious is this room that one is surprised to find how many different bonds and mortars and frieze-designs have really been used. Of the last mentioned, for instance, there are four, and those who have ever endeavored to work out an elaborate pattern in brick will realize the skill required to harmonize four different friezes in one room. All are set off by the brilliant tympanums, proving how excellent the combination of "Tapestry" Brick and faience can be.

Throughout the suite the floors command as much attention as the walls, presenting, as they do, the same admirable characteristics of color variation and texture. The floor in this room is laid with slightly roughened and irregular tile six inches square, in random shades varying from rich red to a deep, mysterious purple. The joints are half inch in width. The smooth, painted effect of the





### THE RED ROOM

This is a view looking northwest. A unique feature of these exhibition rooms is the illumination by immense skylights instead of by ordinary windows, thus producing a soft, diffused light and providing large unbroken wall surfaces for brick treatment. The adjoining gray room, as shown in the picture, is illustrated on pages 10 and 11.

ordinary quarry tile floor is thus entirely overcome; yet the tile and mortar are sufficiently impervious to form a perfectly practical and sanitary floor.

A Gray Room, illustrated on pages 10 and 11, and a Golden-Buff Room, shown on page 7, complete the series and offer the same points of interest as the Red Room, but in the color schemes denoted by their respective titles.

What an opportunity it all offers to grasp the real significance of the term brickwork! What never-before-thought-of uses it indicates for this indestructible material! What pictures it conjures up, not only of beautiful facades for all sorts of city and country buildings, but of anterooms, libraries, dining rooms, billiard rooms and other interiors of the future home, as well as school rooms, offices, hotel lobbies and rathskellers, shops, railway waiting rooms and many other public or semi-public interiors, all beautiful, enduring and of infinite variety!

Nowhere, except perhaps in a few Moorish walls in Spain, has brick been made to sing such a bewitching song as it sings in the Home of "Tapestry" Brick.





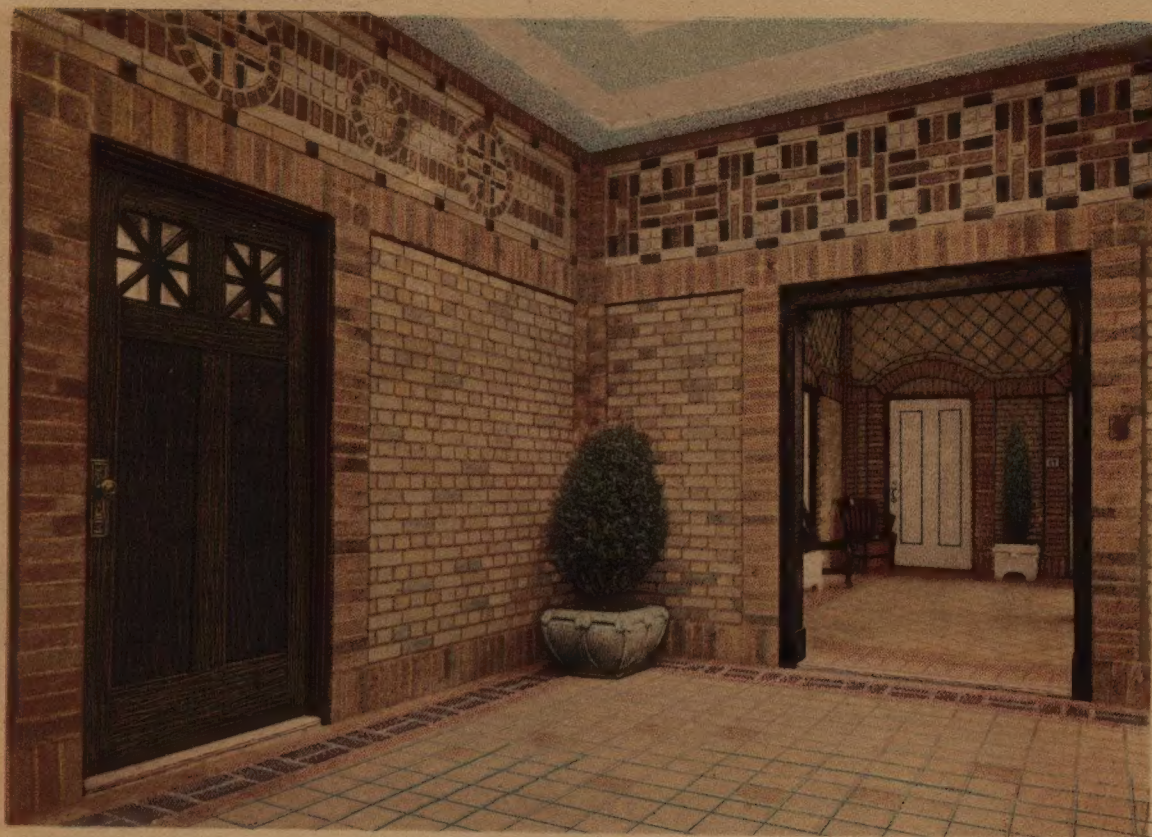
### THE GRAY ROOM

This is a view looking southwest with the Red Room and the Fireplace Room beyond. In this room are Gray "Tapestry" Brick of standard and Norman sizes, with a great variety of treatment. Six different bonds, three different colors of mortar and three different styles of finishing the mortar joints are shown in this room.

Here the atmosphere is vastly different from those dry offices where bricks are scientifically arranged for display—a square yard of red brick, another of buff, another of shiny white, with never a hint at the multitudinous possibilities for bonding and jointing.

A visit to the designing room of Fiske & Company, Inc., is another experience for those who understand what such a room should be. It is not the mechanical draughting room of the ordinary commercial brick concern, where only complex drawings of moulded bricks and patterns are made, along with endless calculations of quantities; it is an atelier where brickwork is studied as an art, just as mosaic designing was studied in the days before the Renaissance invention of fresco drove mosaic from the list of wall decorations. The men who reign in this room are trained designers and subtle colorists. They are not trying merely to make paintings on paper, but to work out with their "Tapestry" Brick unit and with its peculiarities and its limitations always in view, designs that are adapted





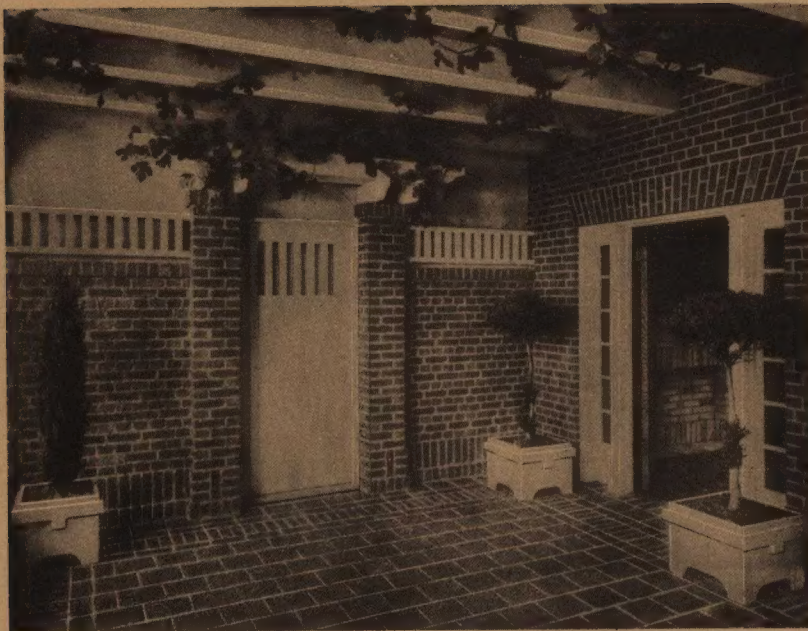
### THE GRAY ROOM

This is a view looking northwest. Special attention is called to the brick pattern-work shown in this room, to the beautiful trim of rich brown shades, and to the Repressed Tile floor, with a decorative brick border, all selected in colors to harmonize with the walls. Through the arched doorway is seen the Golden-Buff Reception Room.

to it, that have the brick technique and that enhance its beauty. The art of laying up "Tapestry" Brick, one might therefore say, grows directly out of its own soil. This is the secret of its great merit; it is not a trade product, but an art product, all the more so since the manufacturers themselves are also the designers.

Yet with all this commendable effort on the part of the manufacturers, it will not be until the public has learned the difference between good and bad that the unlovely, blighting brickwork of a few decades back will be discontinued. Bad work in the domestic crafts can be foisted on the public only so long as purchasers remain uncritical and indiscriminating. This is precisely what one can not remain after a visit to the Home of "Tapestry" Brick. For their efforts to cultivate the judgment and taste of the public, as well as for their success in reviving some of the potential poetry of this world-old material, Fiske & Company, Inc., deserve the praise of everyone interested in beautiful homes.





THE GARDEN WALL

The designing and construction of the Exhibition Rooms described in this book were done by the Designing Department of Fiske & Company, Inc., Henry J. F. Ludeman, architect-in-charge.



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